

Herman Franz Otto Lipfert

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On February 25 of this year, Mr. Lipfert completed forty-six years' service as taxidermist at the Western Australian Museum, Perth. It is considered appropriate, therefore, that this short account of the work he has done in Western Australian ornithology during that period should be published, together with a remarkably good photograph by Mr. S. R. White.

Born at Poessneek, Saxe Meiningen, Germany, in 1864, Mr. Lipfert landed in Western Australia at the end of 1892 and joined the staff of the Museum on February 25, 1894.

During the earlier years of his service with the Museum, Mr. Lipfert spent much time in collecting specimens. The first expedition that he made was to Houtman's Abrolhos, extending from October to December, 1894. The following year, in August and September, he collected in the Kojonup district, during which trip he met the late J. T. Tunney and was instrumental in having the latter engaged as a collector for the Museum, taking him out in the south-west and midland districts and instructing him in the preparation of specimens in the field.

A second visit was made to the Abrolhos Islands, in September, 1897, with the late Richard Helms, who was then biologist to the State Agricultural Department, and a third visit in October, 1898, this last time with the late H. Murray Giles, who was for many years head-keeper of the Zoological Gardens, South Perth, and who specialized in entomology. With the exception of collecting with Maitland Brown, of Geraldton, at the Greenough River, in December, 1898, no further collecting trips were made till July, 1908, when a visit was paid to Rottnest Island.

In August and September, 1910, Mr. Lipfert made a collecting trip to Bernier and Dorré Islands, and an account of the visit, together with a list of the birds recorded, and some very excellent photographs of nests of the White-headed Eagle, the Osprey, and the Wedge-tailed Eagle, were published by him, in 1912, in volume one of the *Records of the Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery*. This trip was closely followed by a visit to the Margaret River, between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin, but no further trip was made till October and November, 1920, when Mr. Lipfert collected in the Stirling Range. In September, 1923, he collected at Shark's Bay, and, in February, 1924, at Lake Yanchep.

The longest trip of his career was, however, yet to be made, when he accompanied—from April, 1930, to August, 1931—the party sent out under the late A. W. Canning to

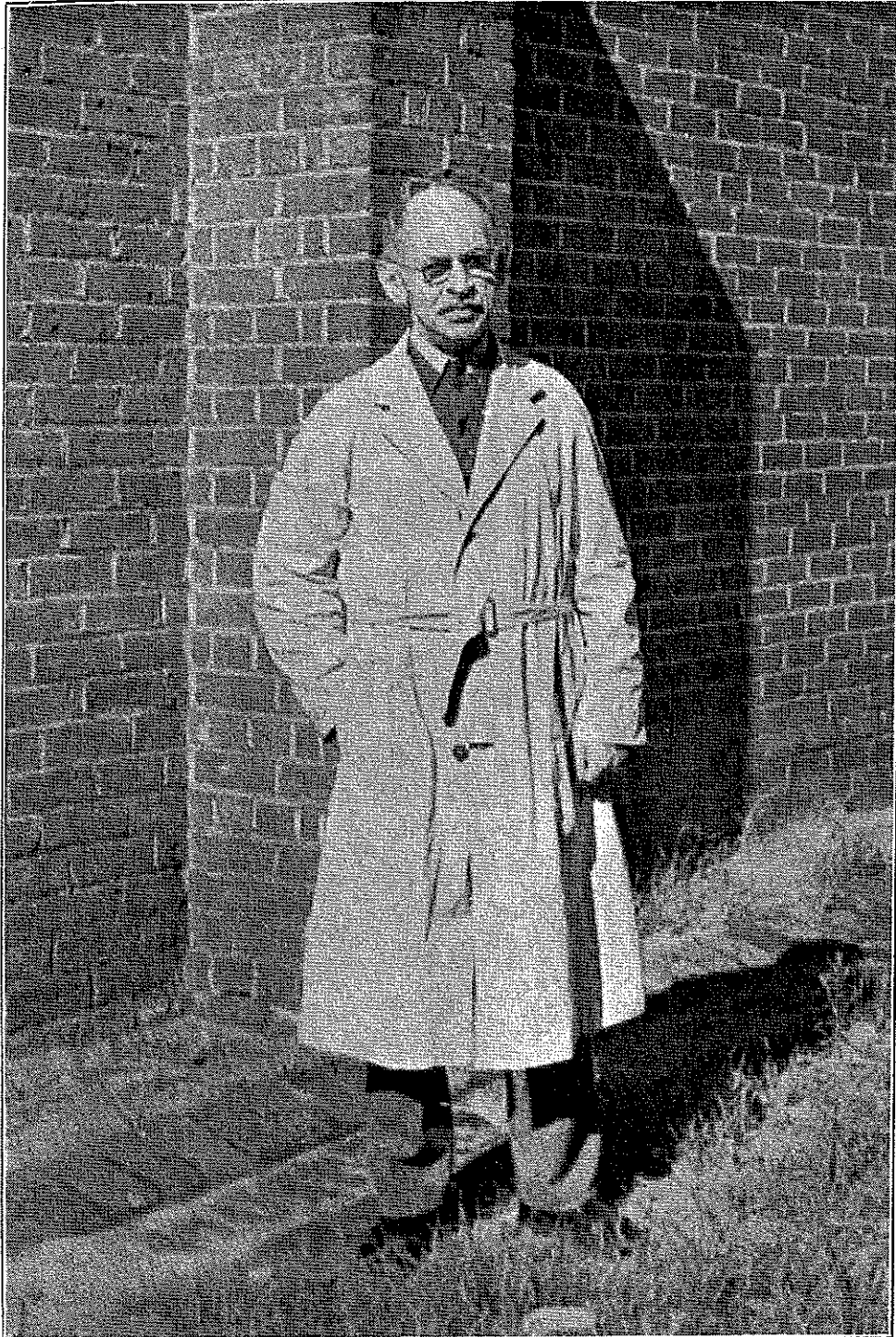


Photo. by S. R. White.

H. F. O. Lipfert.

recondition the wells on the Canning stock route from Wiluna to Hall's Creek. The expenses of sending a collector of specimens of natural history on this expedition were shared equally between the Western Australian and the South Australian Museums, and, as a result, each Museum benefited to the extent of about a hundred bird-skins from an ornithologically little-known region. In January, 1932, he collected in the Mogumber district.

In addition to the distant trips mentioned above, Mr. Lipfert has collected much for the Museum in the more immediate vicinity of Perth and, in 1937, published in *The Emu* "Notes on the Birds of Crawley, Perth, in the Early 'Nineties."

Occurrences of the McCormick Skua on the Coast of New Zealand

By R. A. FALLA, M.A., D.SC., Christchurch, New Zealand

Records of the wanderings of the South Polar Skua, *Catharacta maccormicki* (Saunders), beyond polar seas, are so rare that two recent occurrences on the west coast of the North Island of New Zealand are worthy of note.

A sun-dried body with the plumage intact, now in the Canterbury Museum, was picked up on the Rangitikei beach on January 2, 1940, by Major R. A. Wilson. The bird is in adult plumage, not in moult, sex undetermined, and measures: wing, 374 mm.; tail, 153; tarsus, 60; middle toe and claw, 61; culmen 47.

The next find was reported by Mr. C. A. Fleming, who has managed to preserve the skin of a specimen picked up on the Muriwai beach on April 21, 1940. This bird likewise shows no sign of moult, but lacks the yellow neck hackles which are present on the other. Its dimensions are: wing, 392 mm.; tail, 158; tarsus, 70; middle toe, 72; culmen, 48; sex also undetermined.

The inclusion of this species in the New Zealand list has formerly depended on an identification by Buller (*Supplement, Birds of New Zealand*, vol. 1, p. 170, 1905) of a bird obtained at Paterson Inlet, Stewart Island, in 1895, but the evidence of a specimen that is still available casts some doubt on its correctness. The last of several representative collections of New Zealand birds made by Buller was purchased by the Canterbury Museum in 1923 and it contains a Skua skin bearing a label in Buller's handwriting, "*Megalestris maccormicki*, Stewart Island, 1897, male." It is without doubt the bird he recorded, for had there been more than one the fact would have been stated in the *Supplement*. The discrepancy in date may possibly be explained by the fact that most of Buller's labels bear as